

QUARTERLY NEWS

DDES ISSUING NO-COST PERMITS FOR BLACKBERRY CLEARING

DDES recently refined permitting regulations on blackberry clearing to improve customer service and reduce the burden on property owners. Removing large patches of blackberry can now be done with a free permit from DDES. (Land use laws previously required a permit with a fee based on an hourly rate for removal of more than 7,000 square feet of blackberries.) The department has developed a common sense approach to protecting the environment and also meeting the needs of the individual property owners. The new process for obtaining a no-cost blackberry clearing permit is similar to the process fire districts use to issue burning permits.

The new permitting process for blackberry clearing simply requires the property owner to describe the proposed project and when the work will be performed. DDES then issues a permit to the property owner free of charge. Removal of blackberry patches smaller than 7,000 square feet do not require a permit. The property owner is required to use best manage-



Removing large patches of blackberry vines can now be done with a free permit from DDES.

ment practices during the clearing process. In addition, the permit is restricted to blackberry clearing only. New permits may be required to remove native vegetation, for which permit fees would be charged.

King County DDES has regulatory jurisdiction in unincorporated King County. **To apply for a permit for blackberry removal, property owners should simply contact the DDES Site Development Services Section, at 206-296-6759.** Applicants should specify the property location, contact information and a brief description of the proposed work. A permit will be mailed within one business day. DDES also anticipates issuing permits for blackberry clearing over the internet within the next month.

For additional information, please contact Randy Sandin, Site Development Services Supervisor at 206-296-6778.

In This Issue

DDES ISSUING NO-COST PERMITS FOR BLACKBERRY CLEARING	1
NO-COST RESOURCES FOR LEARNING ABOUT YOUR PROPERTY	2
TEAR-OUT DESK RESOURCE: USER'S GUIDE TO THE DDES WEB PAGE.....	3
SPOTLIGHT ON REDEVELOPMENT: GREENBRIDGE PROJECT BRINGING NEW LIFE TO WHITE CENTER DEVELOPMENT.....	5
CUSTOMER'S GUIDE TO CODE ENFORCEMENT.....	6
TIPS FROM THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT ON SEPTIC SYSTEM MAINTENANCE.....	7
QUESTIONS – JUST ASK US	8

NO-COST RESOURCES FOR LEARNING ABOUT YOUR PROPERTY

King County takes seriously its responsibility to provide quality assistance to property owners on permitting and land use issues. Since adoption of the Critical Areas Ordinance last fall, many property owners have expressed interest in how the new legislation will affect them. Answers to this question and many others can be found through a variety of no-cost resources offered by King County. These include:

OPEN HOUSE FOR PROPERTY OWNERS ON THE CAO: The third in a series of Open Houses on the Critical Areas Ordinance will occur in May. **This open house is designed specifically for property owners in unincorporated King County and will occur on May 19, 2005 at the Preston Community Center, 8625 – 310th Ave. S.E. in Preston, from 6:30 – 9:00 pm.** County staff will be available at the open house to answer landowners' individual questions about critical areas and the permit process, the flexibility programs built into the CAO, and also some of the site-specific conditions on individual parcels. An agenda and additional detail are provided via the **DDES Web site at www.metrokc.gov/ddes.** **Questions can be directed to Paula Adams, DDES Communications Director, 206-296-6682.**

TECHNICAL SUPPORT FOR CUSTOMERS EACH MORNING AT DDES: The DDES Permit Center now offers a full range of technical support to customers between the hours of 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. each day. Customers often need specialized information from specific permit review disciplines such as Plan Review, Critical Areas, Site Review or Clearing and Grading. In the past, staff in these areas may or may not have been available to assist without an appointment. Staff in each review discipline will now be on call to assist in the Permit Center each morning. This assistance is intended for both walk-in customers and customers with specific questions and/or issues during the permit intake process. **For additional information, please contact Chris Ricketts, Permit Center Supervisor at 206-296-6750.**

DEDICATED DDES STAFF TO ANSWER CRITICAL AREA QUESTIONS: DDES has dedicated 2 full-time staff to assist landowners and permit customers free-of-charge with critical area-related questions and issues. Betsy MacWhinney (206-296-6793) and Peshia Klein (206-296-7274) can answer questions on how critical areas can affect the permit process, how to assess if there are critical areas on a specific property, and also how to wisely plan a building project, given new critical area regulations. These staff are not intended to replace the technical reporting requirements associated with some permits, but are available to help landowners address critical areas issues properly and efficiently.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ON RURAL STEWARDSHIP PLANNING, FARM PLANNING AND FORESTRY PLANNING: Because one type of land regulation does not always fit every property, the CAO provides options for flexibility. Landowners have the option to pursue a Rural Stewardship Plan, a Farm Plan or a Forest Plan depending on their own land use goals and zoning. Both Rural Stewardship and Farm Management Planning offer some flexibility from standard critical areas protections in exchange for the long term commitment to ongoing land management actions.

Free technical assistance is available for all three programs. **Farm Planners with the King Conservation District produce Farm Plans for agricultural landowners and can be reached at (425) 277-5581.** King County Foresters and Stewards help landowners produce their own Forest and Rural Stewardship Plans. **To inquire about Forest Planning, contact Bill Lober in the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks at 206-296-7821. For information on Rural Stewardship Planning, contact Katy Vanderpool in the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks at 206-296-8362.**

VISIT DDES ON LINE: The DDES Web page at www.metrokc.gov/ddes offers a range of useful literature on the Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO). The ordinance package itself, as well as best-avail-

Continued on Page 5

USER'S GUIDE TO THE DDES WEB SITE

WWW.METROKC.GOV/DDES

DDES staff invite you to review our department's Web site. A great deal of useful information is available, since DDES strives to bring the information our customers need right into their homes and workplaces.

The outline below highlights the major services DDES offers online, as well as directions on how to access

those services from our main Web page: <http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes>. Simply remove this page and post it by your computer for easy reference.

If you have questions, suggestions, or need additional information, please contact Paula Adams, DDES Communications Director, at 206-296-6682.

PERMIT INFORMATION

SERVICE	HOW TO FIND IT
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)	From the main DDES Web page, click the DDES FAQ link at the left. OR, to save as a favorite: http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/faq/ .
General information on individual types of permits, as well as submittal requirements	From the main DDES Web page, click on the Permit Information link at the left. From there, click on Permit Application Information. OR, to save as a favorite: http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/perminfo/index.htm .
Permit application forms	From the main DDES Web page, click on the Permit Information link at the left. From there, click on Permit Application Forms. OR, to save as a favorite: http://apps01.metrokc.gov/www6/ddes/scripts/forms.cfm
Estimated fees for various permit types	From the main DDES Web page, click on the Permit Information link at the left. From there, click on Permit Fee Estimates. OR, to save as a favorite: http://apps01.metrokc.gov/www/ddes/scripts/fee2004.cfm .
Generate your own custom reports listing permits processed by DDES	From the main DDES Web page, click on the Permit Information link at the left. From there, click on Online Permit Reports: Information on Pending or Issued Permits. After reviewing the disclaimer, choose search options. OR, to save as a favorite: http://apps01.metrokc.gov/www6/ddes/scripts/permsearch.cfm .
General information on a wide variety of building and land use topics	From the main DDES Web page, simply click on the Information Bulletins link at the left. OR, to save as a favorite: http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/bulletin.htm .
Critical areas information	From the main DDES Web page, click on the Permit Information link at the left. From there, click on Critical Areas Ordinance Information. OR, to save critical areas information as a favorite: http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/cao/ and to save Wetland and Stream Reporting Guidelines as a favorite: http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/sensarea/index.htm .

RESEARCHING YOUR PROPERTY

To research critical areas, assessment and zoning information on any individual parcel in King County	From the main DDES Web page, click on the Property Research link at the left. From there, click on GIS Property Search. Read through the disclaimers and continue pushing the GO button at each opportunity. OR, to save as a favorite: http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/gis/parcel/ . iMAP is King County's comprehensive property search tool. Save Parcel Viewer at http://www.metrokc.gov/gis/mappointal/PViewer_main.htm as a favorite for conducting fast property searches using an address, a parcel number, or by navigating on a simple map.
---	---

Continued on Page 4

USER'S GUIDE TO THE DDES WEB SITE, CONTINUED

RESEARCHING YOUR PROPERTY, continued

Research area zoning in King County	From the main DDES Web page, click on the Property Research link at the left. From there, click on Countywide Zoning Map or Countywide Land Use Map. Read the directions and press OK. Then, scroll down and click on the area of King County you are interested in. OR, to save as favorites: http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/gis/zatlas.htm and http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/gis/luatlas.htm .
View maps showing boundary lines for new city annexations and incorporations	From the main DDES Web page, click on the Property Research link at the left. From there, click on Annexation and Incorporation Activity Within King County. OR, to save as a favorite: http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/gis/incannx.htm .

CODES AND POLICIES AFFECTING LAND USE IN KING COUNTY

SERVICE	HOW TO FIND IT
King County Code, complete text	From the main DDES Web page, click on the Codes & Policies link at the left. From there, click on King County Code or other code related links. OR, to save Codes & Policies as a favorite: http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/code_pol.htm and the King County Code as a favorite: http://www.metrokc.gov/mkcc/code/ .
King County Comprehensive Plan	From the main DDES Web page, click on the Growth Management link at the left. From there, click on any of the bullets pertaining to the Comprehensive Plan. OR, to save as a favorite: http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/compplan/ .
DDES Legislative News	From the main DDES Web page, click on the DDES News at Council link at the left. From there, click on any of the bullets regarding ordinances and motions pending at the Metropolitan King County Council which impact DDES operations. OR, to save as a favorite: http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/legnews/ .

HOT TOPICS AT DDES

SERVICE	HOW TO FIND IT
New information or high profile/controversial permit applications	From the main DDES Web page, click on the Hot Topics pull down menu in the upper, central portion of the page.
Online and enhanced customer services	From the main DDES Web page, click on Permit Information. From there, choose Enhanced Customer Services at DDES to view online services and other customer service initiatives. OR, To save as a favorite: http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/services.htm .
DDES newsletter, complete text plus past issue	From the main DDES Web page, click on the DDES Newsletter link at the left. OR, To save as a favorite: http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/q_news.htm .
Submitting code enforcement complaints to DDES online	From the main DDES Web page, click on the Code Enforcement link at the left. OR, To save as a favorite: http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/ce/ .
Business Licenses at DDES	From the main DDES Web page, click on the Business Licenses link at the left. OR, To save as a favorite: http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/business/index.shtm .
Fire Marshal's Office	From the main DDES Web page, click on the Fire Marshal's Office link at the left. OR, To save as a favorite: http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/fire/ .
Complete Web Site Directory	From the main DDES Web page, click on the Site Map & User's Guide link at the left for a list of all information available on DDES' Web site. OR, To save as a favorite: http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/contents.htm .

SPOTLIGHT ON REDEVELOPMENT: GREENBRIDGE PROJECT BRINGING NEW LIFE TO WHITE CENTER NEIGHBORHOOD

PROJECT BACKGROUND: The Greenbridge development covers a 93.5 acre site in the White Center area of unincorporated King County. It is the former location of the Park Lake Homes community that was originally developed in the 1940's with 569 housing units and approximately 40,000 square feet of community facilities. The proposal involves redevelopment of the site to create a mixed-income, pedestrian-oriented community containing housing, parks and open space, community services and new infrastructure. The project is meeting some green building standards and, in particular, is reducing impervious surface by reducing road widths. This project also facilitates county goals to provide affordable housing.

The site will be redeveloped pursuant to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's HOPE VI program, which provides funding to revitalize public housing. The project will provide 900 to 1,100 residential housing units, as well as 80,000 to 100,000 square feet of community-oriented uses, which could ultimately include a branch library, community center, youth and family facilities, Head Start and child care facility, Sheriff's office, food bank, career development center, meeting/gathering space, and approximately 22,300 square feet of neighborhood-scale retail uses.

PERMITTING INNOVATIONS: The Greenbridge project is one of three King County demonstration projects authorized by ordinance. The ordinance has allowed DDES to approve retail and commercial space which would not previously have been permitted on



Architect's drawing of a portion of the Green Bridge development at completion.

the location and, also to consolidate the reviews for multiple roads and drainage variances into a single application packet. Finally, a dedicated permit review team has been established at DDES, ensuring that permit applications are reviewed and processed as efficiently as possible. DDES is proud to play a role in a commercial development which offers so much vitality to an old neighborhood.

The subdivision has received preliminary approval and DDES has recently approved the engineering plans. The department anticipates issuing building permits for six multi-family buildings within the next 30-60 days.

For additional information, please contact Current Planning Supervisor Lisa Dinsmore at 206-296-7171.

NO-COST RESOURCES FOR LEARNING ABOUT YOUR PROPERTY, CONTINUED

Continued from Page 2

able-science documents, a user's manual, customer assistance bulletins and general questions and answers are all provided. DDES has also recently completed a workshop series for builders, realtors and other

professionals on the CAO. This workshop plays on demand in its entirety via the web, and is also available on DVD. **Simply contact Paula Adams, DDES Communications Director, at 206-296-6682.**

CUSTOMER'S GUIDE TO CODE ENFORCEMENT

The DDES Office of Code Enforcement investigates complaints of code violations on private property as outlined in Title 23 of the King County Code. Examples of violations handled by Code Enforcement include, but are not limited to: construction without a permit, substandard housing, illegally placed mobile homes or factory-assembled structures, open wells and other hazardous conditions, dangerous or open to entry buildings, zoning code infractions and livestock infractions. Code Enforcement staff also pursue illegal filling in wetlands, piping streams and clearing and grading without permits.

COMPLAINT FILING PROCEDURES:

Complaints to Code Enforcement may be filed any one of several ways:

- Call 206-296-6680 during regular business hours;
- Call 1-888-437-4771 during weekends and off-hours for the most serious environmental complaints. Examples of calls appropriate for this number would be major clearing violations or paint spills into a creek. For urgent matters, a DDES staff member will be dispatched to the site within a few hours.
- By letter to DDES Code Enforcement, 900 Oakesdale Ave. SW, Renton, WA, 98055.
- Via the **DDES Web page at www.metrokc.gov/ddes**. Simply click the *Code Enforcement* button.

Code Enforcement staff request that the following information be included with a complaint: Address or parcel number of the property in violation, name of the property owner, name of the tenant if the property is leased, and description of the violation. It is helpful to include your name and phone number; however, complaints can be filed anonymously.

THE CODE ENFORCEMENT PROCESS: Upon receipt of a complaint, the Code Enforcement Office will gather basic property information and assign the complaint a case number. Complaints are then routed to a specific Code Enforcement Officer for investigation. Initial contact with a suspected violator generally occurs within 30 days of receiving a complaint,



Brenda Wood of the DDES Code Enforcement Section investigating a junk car site.

although environmental hazards and other high priority cases are investigated as quickly as possible, usually within 24 hours.

Some violations are quick to resolve, while others take more time due to their complexity. Code Enforcement officers work with property owners in an attempt to educate them about the specific code requirements which apply to their property. If the property owner is willing to work with the officer, then both parties agree to a compliance schedule. If the violator is a repeat offender or is unwilling to bring the property into compliance, the officer will issue an order which typically includes civil penalties and the possibility of a lien on the property. The order may be appealed to the Hearing Examiner and scheduled for a public hearing. In some extreme cases, the Code Enforcement office may abate the violation by hiring a contractor to bring the property into compliance.

NUISANCE COMPLAINTS TO CODE

ENFORCEMENT: The most frequent type of case handled by Code Enforcement is the nuisance complaint. This type of complaint comprises about 50 to 60% of all the complaints received. Nuisance complaints involve properties with an accumulation of rubbish or junk including, but not limited to, refuse, garbage, scrap metal, lumber, concrete, asphalt, piles of earth, tires, etc. These properties may also include abandoned, wrecked, dismantled or inoperative vehicles or vehicle engines.

Most cases are resolved through direct negotiations

Continued on Page 8

TIPS FROM THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT ON SEPTIC SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

When you ask a homeowner, “How do you maintain your septic system?” Most will say, “I get it pumped out regularly.” Unfortunately, regular pumping is not the only measure a homeowner should take when it comes to septic system maintenance. King County requires all property owners whose properties are served by a septic system to have the septic system inspected regularly.

SELECTING AN INSPECTOR: If your septic system is gravity or a pump to gravity system, you may do your own inspections. However, if the system is anything other than gravity-fed, King County requires the homeowner to hire a King County licensed maintainer to inspect the system and file a report with Public Health - Seattle & King County. Be sure to review the current list of the King County licensed maintainers. This list is available on line at www.metrokc.gov/health/wastewater/index.htm. (Inspections by a pumper, installer or designer can not be accepted.) The maintainer will inspect all components of the system which could include baffles, pumps, alarms, timers, dose volumes, UV light bulbs, tank integrity, distribution box, pretreatment devices, and the drainfield.

INSPECTION FREQUENCIES: Inspection frequencies vary according to the system type. For example, pressure distribution systems must have a report filed every year if a garbage disposal is being used or every three years with no garbage disposal. Sand filter and mound systems are to be inspected annually by a licensed maintainer. The systems that require the greatest frequency of inspections are upflow sand filters which need to be inspected every six months and aerobic treatment units that require inspections every three months.

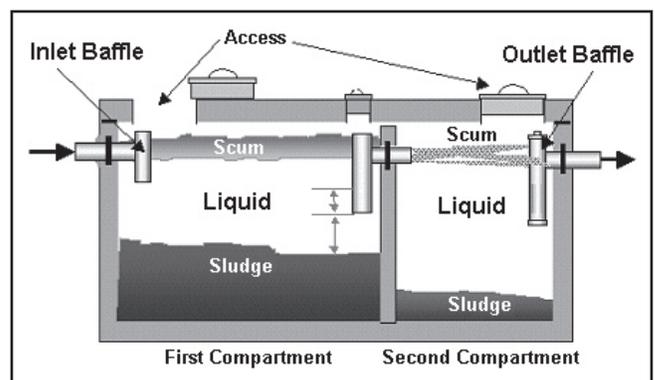
Homeowners of a gravity system need to inspect their system every year if the household uses a garbage disposal or every three years if no garbage disposal is being used. An inspection should include checking the levels of scum and solids in the tank to determine if the tank needs to be pumped and making sure that all baffles are connected properly and are in good condition. Public Health suggests that the average household should have their tank pumped every three to five

years. If the baffles have filters on them, these need to be cleaned regularly. Baffle screens that are not cleaned can cause sewage to back up into the house. Also, the homeowner should check that the access lids are watertight, since ground water intrusion into septic tanks can put added stress on the drainfield. The drainfield should be checked for signs of odors, wet or soggy spots and surfacing sewage. Keeping the drainfield area free of overgrown vegetation will also make it easier to spot any problems.

A homeowner may ask, “Why is there a need to have my system inspected so often or even at all?” The answer can be found in the same reason that people are advised to see their doctor on a regular basis. Routine appointments are more likely to detect problems at an early stage when treatment is most effective. Preventative maintenance of septic systems may also detect problems early enough that the repair cost is minimal in comparison to replacing an entire system. In addition to the obvious health concerns, replacing a septic system can cost anywhere from \$5,000 to \$25,000.

ADDITIONAL TIPS: Besides regular inspections, all homeowners of septic systems should take part in keeping their systems healthy. Simple measures such as not using garbage disposals, spacing out the amount of water your household uses throughout the day and week, checking all plumbing fixtures for any leaks, and not flushing harmful materials into the septic system such as grease, harsh chemicals, diapers,

Continued on Page 8



Inner workings of a septic tank.

QUESTIONS – JUST ASK US

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Director

Stephanie Warden 206-296-6700

Communications Director

(media relations, publications, web content, customer service)

Paula Adams 206-296-6682

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DIVISION

Division Director

Jim Schaber 206-296-6684

Information Systems Supervisor

Michael Pahl 206-296-6706

Internal Services Supervisor

Greg Anderson 206-296-7130

Human Resources Supervisor

Kathy Graves 206-296-6725

BUILDING SERVICES DIVISION

Division Director

Mike Dykeman 206-296-6761

Intake and Screening Supervisor

(permit applications)

Chris Ricketts 206-296-6750

Technical Screening/Building Review Supervisor

Pamela Dhanapal 206-296-6731

Building Inspections Supervisor

(residential and commercial structures)

Bernard Moore 206-296-6762

Site Engineering and Planning Supervisor

(drainage review, parking, traffic, landscaping)

Jim Chan 206-296-6740

Fire Marshal

(inspections, fire investigations, fire system permits)

Jim Rankin 206-296-7071

LAND USE SERVICES DIVISION

Division Director

Joe Miles 206-296-7179

Engineering Review Supervisor

(final plats and short plats, lot line adjustments)

Jim Sanders 206-296-7178

Current Planning Supervisor

(preliminary plat and short plats, SEPA, EIS, CUPs, shoreline permits)

Lisa Dinsmore 206-296-7171

Site Development Services Supervisor

(clearing, grading and forestry permits)

Randy Sandin 206-296-6778

Critical Areas Supervisor

(wetlands, streams, geo hazards)

Steve Botthheim 206-296-7144

Land Use Inspections Supervisor

(site infrastructure)

Steve Townsend 206-296-7204

Interim Code Enforcement Supervisor

(building, environmental and health hazard complaints)

Lamar Reed 206-296-7071

CUSTOMER SERVICE NUMBERS

DDES Customer Information Line 206-296-6600

Permit Application Appointments 206-296-6797

DDES Billing Hot Line 206-296-6659

CUSTOMER'S GUIDE TO CODE ENFORCEMENT, CONT.

Continued from Page 6

with the property owner. Officers will always first try and get voluntary compliance.

For additional information on Code Enforcement procedures, log onto the Code Enforcement web page at www.metrokc.gov/ddes/ce, or contact Interim Code Enforcement Supervisor, Lamar Reed at 206-296-7071.

TIPS FROM THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT ON SEPTIC SYSTEM MAINTENANCE, CONT.

Continued from Page 7

facial tissue, coffee grounds or cat litter will put your system at a better advantage in reaching its full life expectancy.

INFORMATION RESOURCES: There are many educational resources available from Public Health: Homeowner brochures on how to measure scum and solids in a septic tank, landscaping tips, and what to do when the power fails all can be found on the **Public Health–Seattle & King County website: <http://metrokc.gov/health/wastewater/>**. Also available are extensive homeowner manuals for each type of septic system.

Public Health offers free workshops to owners of septic systems. The next workshops will be May 11th and May 14th. If you would like to sign up for a workshop or obtain customer assistance materials, please call Michelle Britt, Operation and Maintenance Program Manager at 206-205-8962.



King County

Department of Development and Environmental Services

QUARTERLY NEWS

900 Oakesdale Ave. SW, Renton, WA 98055-1219
Subscription information: Paula Adams 206-296-6682

Alternative Formats Available

206-684-2046 TTY Relay: 206-689-4665